

September 2020

This is an internal document for STEPP grantees only.

Story Ideas for Pitching to the Media

In addition to sending out a press release, it can be helpful to include a personalized pitch for reporters that highlights youth vaping data in your community. Below we provide some ideas and tips for crafting a pitch.

If you have questions or need assistance, contact SE2, STEPP's communications technical assistance provider, at TA@se2communications.com.

Objectives:

Pitch stories to your local media that:

- Emphasize the prevalence of vaping in Colorado and your community.
- Illustrate the concerns and risks associated with youth vaping in Colorado and your community.
- Direct people to CDPHE's vape resources for parents and other trusted adults.
- Support a local tobacco control policy, if appropriate.
- Describe new local, state and federal steps taken to reduce youth vaping and any positive impacts of those in your region.

Tips:

- Email reporters individually and customize your pitch. If you don't hear back after a couple of days, follow up with a phone call or email.
- Keep your pitch email short. Include the most relevant data points to support your story and offer a spokesperson to discuss more.
- Highlight local data to prove why this is relevant to your community.
 - The 2019 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey results are now available and data on youth tobacco use is available statewide and by 21 regions in Colorado. High school student



survey data can be customized by topic and region at [this link](#). Tips for navigating this data dashboard are available [here](#).

Infographics will become available, [here](#).

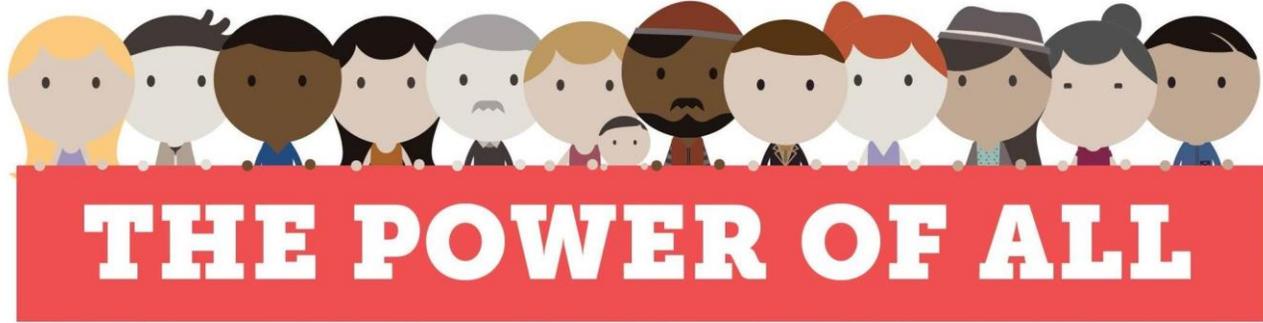
For statewide and regional data requests, contact cdphe.healthstatistics@state.co.us.

- Remember your ultimate audience is parents – not health professionals. Keep any information on health risks or effects at an accessible level and use plain, straightforward language.

Story Ideas:

Consider the following story angles / spokespeople in your media outreach

- Vaping's impact on your community
- Highlight regional data from the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey that explicitly talks about the prevalence of vaping in your community. If it is higher than the state as a whole, raise that as an urgent concern. If it is lower, identify what may be helping reduce youth vaping, including local policies. (Remember that the latest Healthy Kids Colorado Survey data was collected in 2019, so would not have been impacted by local policies passed since then.)
- Health risks of vaping
 - Have a local doctor or health official speak specifically to the health risks of vaping, especially during COVID-19 pandemic. [This research](#) offers data on how vaping significantly increases the risk of COVID-19 for youth
- T21 and other policies
 - Selling tobacco products, including vape products that include nicotine, is now [prohibited to those under 21 years old](#). In addition, tobacco retailers in Colorado will need state licenses by July of 2021 with annual compliance checks. Their licenses could be revoked if they are caught repeatedly selling to those under 21. What's been the impact of this in your community? Is it already reducing illegal sales to youth? Did your



- community already have or plan similar policies and, if so, what's the impact? Do you expect this to make a big difference in the future?
- Highlight any other types of local policies -- planned or passed -- that are aimed at addressing youth vaping and other types of tobacco use in your region. Specifically how are they currently helping or how do you expect these policies to reduce youth vaping in your community?
 - What is the positive impact of trusted adults in reducing youth substance use, including tobacco? For example, the latest Healthy Kids Colorado Survey data shows that youth who can ask their parents for help with a personal problem are less likely to vape. It also shows that youth with clear family rules are less likely to vape. What advice do we have for parents, guardians and other adults who support youth in your community? (For more information about building strong connections with youth, visit [ForwardTogetherCO.com](https://www.forwardtogetherco.com).)